

THE BOSTON INFORMER

No. 89

The truly highbrow rag for people who can read

April 1, 2009

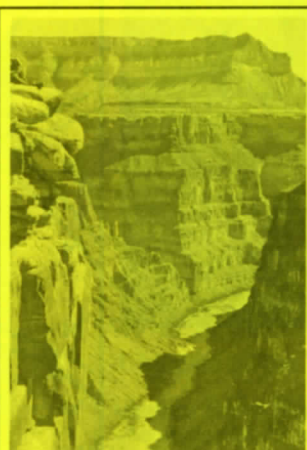


Government Stimulus Funds Critical Jobs

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, aka the government stimulus package, is not only a jobs program, but also a green program. A two-fer. Massachusetts Stimulus wonk Jeffrey Simon announced that Massachusetts has already funded a statewide recycling program (shown here at Downtown Crossing) which has the group on the right picking up recycled trash from the street and the group on the left dropping recycled trash which is in turned picked up by the group on the right. Each day the roles are reversed.

Rural and less populous parts of the state will receive large fans to blow trash from one side of the road to the other to permit smaller "work" crews to participate.

Mayor Announces Study to Deal with 'Canyonization' of the Greenway



When the Sierra Club and the Conservation Commission heard "canyon," they pictured something akin to the Grand Canyon and were quite concerned about the possible run off with this design approach.



A consultant was feverishly scribbling ideas for cannonization which would reflect the history of the Boston Harbor and Castle Island/Fort Independence.



A Japanese tourist heard about the Mayor's plan and thought it could help in foreign trade to encourage Canon to sell more cameras and copiers in Boston.



A member of the Archdiocese jumped for joy thinking this was the chance for a canonization and immediately came up with an iconic image similar to that of the Sugar Loaf figure in Rio De Janeiro.

Mayor Menino's "rivalry" with New York City's dynamic Mayor Bloomberg was evident with Menino's recent swipe at a NYC phenomenon, "canyonization."

Menino's recently commissioned design competition to prevent canyonization along the new Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Greenway will attempt to outdo Bloomberg's recent (last month) 14 major initiatives for traffic calming/road diets, transit, cycling, recycling, child care tax credits, anti-obesity, anti-smoking and inclusionary zoning. Despite a clear (for Menino) presentation at the announcement, a number of consultants and interested parties came away with some different interpretations of what the City was requesting.

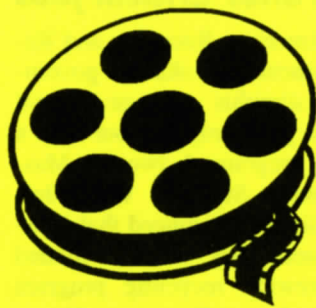
The results will be in soon and promise to be interesting.

Movies Not to Miss!

Push — an action story about Governor Patrick trying to get action from the Legislature on remedies for the bankrupt MassPike and MBTA and for collapsing road and bridge infrastructure.

Doubt — a docudrama about Wall Street’s reaction to the government’s economic stimulus package.

Milk — a crime story of the convoluted pension schemes devised by the Legislature to milk the taxpayer.



Notorious — a mystery tale of how Massachusetts was only rated 17th of the 50 states in corruption by USA Today (North Dakota was rated first).

The Reader — the story of how the new title “Reader” was picked by the Mass. House of Representatives for its leader after three successive title holders disgraced the title “Speaker.”

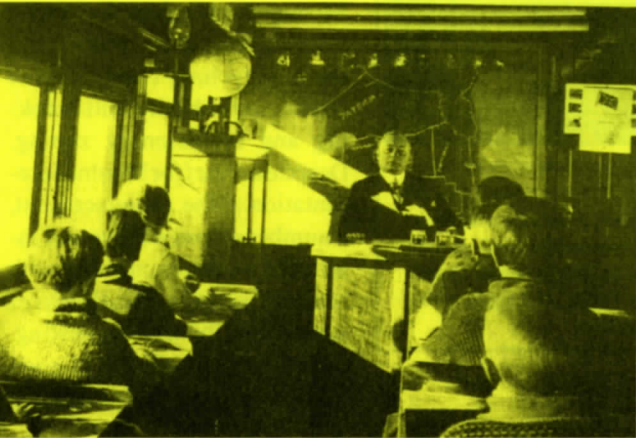
Under the Sea — a science fiction epic of global warming causing sea levels to rise and flood Boston, leaving the State House on Beacon Hill surrounded by water and a refuge for politicians hiding from subpoena servers.

Shuttle — documentary about shuttling State House staffers from office to office.

New School Zones Proposed

Responding to pressure, Boston Public Schools may replace its current school assignment zones with even smaller zones resulting in some of the smallest school zones in the country. Following the lead of our neighbor to the north, Boston may create zones as small as a railroad car, which can easily become the school itself.

Preliminary ideas for Boston’s plan include using some Green Line cars as well as modified Silver Line buses and may just be the answer to local schools. MBTA officials estimated the 3-mile trip on the Green Line Kenmore to North Station takes close to 50 minutes, just slow enough to fit in a middle-school history class. Classes on the faster Silver Line buses will be Honors classes for quick learners. To make a dent in its \$160 million revenue shortfall, the MBTA is considering leasing some of its rolling stock and is offering some of its personnel to assist students in learning how to text-message and drive.



What is This?

Be the first to correctly identify the object in the photo below and win a valuable prize. Clues are provided but they may not actually relate to this photo.



Clues:

- ◆ New Greenway mini-building...
- ◆ Silver Line tunnel under Boston Common needs to breathe...
- ◆ Shaped by new Greenway District design guidelines...

Send all guesses to Trixie Watson, The Boston Informer’s sixth-grade intern funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, at PO Box 51473, Boston 02205. Valuable prize subject to receipt of the federal stimulus funds by The Boston Informer and how much Trixie’s field trip to Providence will cost.

Velo Menino

On a recent walking tour of burrito shops and Keno parlors, Mayor Menino seized the chance to discuss major policy initiatives with the minions and media who followed.

After five minutes on affordable housing, sustainability, K-12 education and public safety, Menino saw a bike messenger and gushed

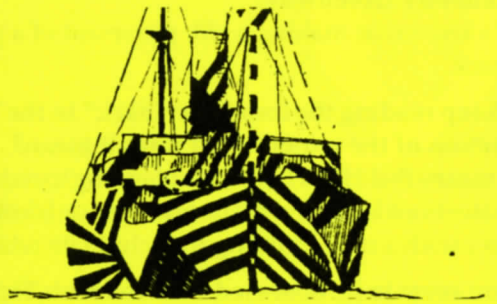


about his plan to make Boston bike-friendly. Building on bike lanes on Perkins Street and Comm. Ave., Menino announced plans for bike lanes on the Southeast Expressway. Passing a bike share

rental station (above) he commented on how successful the bike share program is, pointing to the only remaining bike in the station.

BRA Finds ‘Hidden’ Solution to Height Violations

Dazzle Painting has become the rage in parts of the South Boston waterfront and the City is looking to use this approach on reducing the apparent height on some of the proposed buildings now in the planning stages



Seen on a VIP’s Blackberry

IIR, the Big Dig saved Mass, in 1990s bust. ISAGN for a “Little Dig” for same. NM if it’s a WOTAM—it’s for jobs. Repubs were LOP-SOD & now Dems will KB. IMO, NMTE, Gov. should GWI and do INPO Silver Line 3, Blue/Red, FallRiv/NB, Urban Ring—WE.

C-T is SITD and will do BAU with little \$ spent for GJ. Listen, U and I know AFAH-MASP, so NMTE Mass. should DTRT and spend the \$ ASAP. YKWIM? JM2C; ciao—Fred PS—If UCRT U must be ACORN person.

Headlines You’ll Never Read

- ✓ Governor’s Transportation Reform Transforms Mass.
- ✓ Turnpike Authority Commits Extra Cash to Columbus Center Deck
- ✓ Governor names Steve Kaiser ‘Citizen Advocate of the Year’
- ✓ Menino Rides Bike Outside Hyde Park
- ✓ South Coast region rejects rail; seeks money for education
- ✓ MBTA General Manager takes train to work for first time
- ✓ Βοστων Θεατερ Διστριχτ Τηριδερ
- ✓ BRA listens

What’s Up?

Updated Downtown Crossing — Now that it has been shown that cars and people mix very well, it has been proposed that the Southeast Expressway be lined with shops and cafes in order that the car, driver, occupants, cyclists and pedestrians take advantage of this newly discovered mixture of shopping and vehicle equation. The Chestnut Hill Mall and Burlington Mall are going one step further and are seeking ways to bring cars through the interior malls to liven up the action there. The Burlington Mall manager is reviewing The Blues Brothers movie to help determine appropriate, but context-sensitive, turning radii for autos in the 1968 mall. Drive-through banks, donut shops and photo stores are grabbing the best in-mall locations.

Lights Out? — The City of Boston has announced it will participate in a “Lights Out” program that will turn off all lights for one hour throughout the City. The talk-show circuit was abuzz after the announcement, with many people stating they thought the lights have been out at City Hall for some time. A number of callers speculated that this is the reason the Mayor has had difficulty of late in developing a vision for the future.

Still More Drivel on Downtown Crossing — Mayor Menino led a contingent of fawning Downtown Crossing fans and reporters on a mini-tour of the much-maligned shopping area. After a six-piece jazz band performed, Red Sox star Jonathan Papelbon danced and a Locke-Ober catered lunch buffet was served, the Mayor cut the ribbon opening a new Keno parlor at the former Barnes & Noble Bookstore. The tour took participants to the site of the planned skateboard park, a new store for duplicating keys and a brand new dollar store. The Mayor said his Downtown Crossing plan is moving along nicely.

Hidden Benefits of Transportation Reform — Governor Patrick’s Transportation Reorganization Bill which would merge all transportation agencies has some hidden advantages of flexibility not touted by the Governor. **Equipment** could be shared; e.g., buses could be fitted with snow plows for tremendous savings by eliminating snow plow contractors. Blue Line trains could be rented out overnight as hotels for Logan Airport travelers. MBTA water ferries could be fitted with fire hoses, replacing the seldom-used fire boats. **Personnel:** train mechanics could work on broken bridges; bus drivers, with a little training, could be available as reserve pilots for hire from Massport to airlines; MBTA dispatchers could fill in for air traffic controllers when needed. The possibilities are endless.

Breaking News: Mayor Considers US State Dept. Position Recent reports indicate that Mayor Menino may be named Undersecretary to the Deputy Assistant Director to the Administrator for Strategic Analysis of Union Negotiations for Uzbekistan/Kazakhstan border issues. This high-profile position seems to be the direct result of Menino’s Democratic Convention work and his support for Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. Stay tuned.



The Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Greenback Conservancy is getting creative. Responding to fear that the Federal Stimulus funds will fall short; that all Starbucks are closing; and the need for a real revenue booster as well as an energy booster, the Conservancy is offering an activity on the Greenway that is sure to stimulate.

For only \$4 (\$2 for seniors), Greenway visitors can have an uplifting experience.

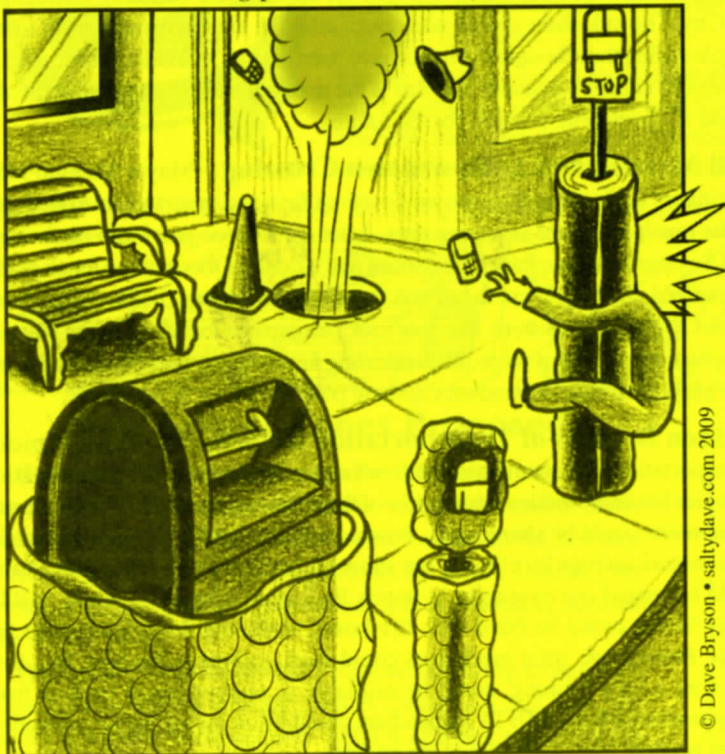
Welcome to The Boston **Mis**Informer,

the annual April Fool's issue of The Boston Informer, an otherwise "serious" newsletter covering development, construction and transportation downtown.

The Boston Informer is published by ATC Information, Inc., six times yearly in Boston, Massachusetts. President: Anthony Casendino; vice-presidents, Anne McKinnon, Chris Fincham.

The Boston Informer is available by mail only. \$25.00 per year (cheap!). Questions? Telephone (617) 723-7030, fax (617) 437-1886 or e-mail: BostonInformer@cs.com. Web: www.bostoninformer.com.

Newsflash: Walking and text-messaging caused 12,000 accidents involving pedestrians last year in Boston



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Boston has begun padding lampposts and street furniture to prevent 'walk and text' injuries.

You Were Asking

- Q. In these tough economic times, why, in the federal operating budget, was \$22 million allocated to expand the Kennedy Library and \$5 million to build a Boston Harbor Islands kiosk on the Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Greenway?
- A. It's known as making a silk purse out of a pig's ear-mark.
- Q. I keep reading the term "clawback" in the business section of the paper. What does it mean?
- A. It means that Hook Lobster is planning to redevelop its waterfront location on Atlantic Avenue (destroyed by fire) with a new building to include its retail store.
- Q. You seem to be obsessed with the Hub Ticket redevelopment saga. You must have run 20 stories about plans to build on that Kneeland Street site. Why?
- A. Actually, The Boston Informer has covered the issue five times in 17 years. But we see your point. The site is a stupid corner of nothing, but as intellectual analysts of urban change, we are fascinated by the bizarre, counter-intuitive and backward "planning" and permitting by the City at this spec of land for 27 years.
- Q. That special transportation commission started talking about raising the gas tax in 2006! Wouldn't it be a good idea to stop dithering and just do it?
- A. Yes.
- Q. The City is under pressure to open Downtown Crossing to cars. Why not instead close Newbury Street to cars and allow cars to park in vacant storefronts?
- A. Umm, there are so many vacant stores on Newbury Street that it might be mistaken for a used-car dealer's lot.

Mis

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Save the Date!

2010 is the 50th anniversary of the Boston Redevelopment Authority's consolidation of planning & development functions through abolition of the City Planning Board. Help plan the gala! Call Sherman Kressett (617-555-1222) to volunteer. Seats on the planning committee will be saved for victims of Urban Renewal, the Article 80 steamroller and friends of the Mayor.